

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT REPORT**

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**DATE:** September 6, 2001

**TO:** Orange County Zoning Administrator

**FROM:** Planning and Development Services Department/Current Planning Services Division

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing on Planning Application PA01-0042 for Use Permit

**PROPOSAL:** The applicant requests approval of a Use Permit per Orange County Zoning Code Section 7-9-111 SR "Sign Restriction" District, to install a 30 feet high 200 square feet business pole sign at the Green Rive Golf Club.

**LOCATION:** The Green River Golf Club is located in eastern Orange County, on the north side of the Riverside Freeway (SR-91), between Coal Canyon Road and the Orange/San Bernardino County line. The project address is 5215 Green River Road, Corona. Third Supervisorial District

**APPLICANT:** Amada American, Inc. (Green River Golf Club)

**STAFF** William V. Melton, Project Manager

**CONTACT:** Phone: (714) 834-2541 FAX: (714) 834-4652

**SYNOPSIS:** Current Planning Services Division recommends Zoning Administrator approval of PA01-0042 with modification to the applicant's proposal subject to the attached Findings and Conditions of Approval.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Green River Golf Club was developed in the early 1950s and over the years was expanded to the current size. The present and much larger current clubhouse facilities were completed in 1992 and the original clubhouse was demolished. The old clubhouse was built on a property high point and was visible from the Riverside Freeway. According to the applicant, there was either a large roof sign on the clubhouse or a sign on the adjacent slope that was visible from the freeway advertising the Green River Golf Course. Because the County did not have sign requirements at that time, there are no records whether or not there was a sign. The only sign on the site now is a small sign located at the end of Green River Drive at what once was an access road to the Riverside Freeway.

The site is now developed with two regulation 18-hole golf courses, a pro shop and full service clubhouse with complete restaurant and bar facilities. The two courses are located in Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The two courses are designated the Orange Course and the Riverside Course. That portion of the Green River Golf Club within Orange County, the Orange Course, is zoned A1 "General Agricultural" District with overlay districts of SR "Sign Restriction" District and FP-1 "Flood Plain 1" District. The site is adjacent to the Riverside Freeway (SR-91), which is designated as a "Scenic

Highway” under the Transportation Element of the County’s General Plan. In-between the freeway and the golf course runs the Santa Ana River, which is why the site has the FP-1 overlay. The golf course has flooded in the past.

The sign proposed is classified as a “Pole Sign” as to type and a “Business Sign” as to use under Zoning Code Section 7-9-144 “Signs”. Additionally, because of the SR District overlay, signs on the site are subject to Zoning Code Section 7-9-111 SR “Sign Restriction” District. Business pole signs are permitted in the SR District and the A1 District subject to approval of a Use Permit by the Zoning Administrator.

The proposed pole sign is 30 feet in height, as measured from finished grade to the top of the sign, leaving 20 feet of air space from finished grade to the bottom of the sign. The proposed sign is 200 square feet in area measuring 20 feet wide and 10 feet high. The sign is proposed to be double faced, internally illuminated and positioned to be read from both east and west traveling motorist. Proposed sign copy includes the club logo, “Green River Golf Club” (in green lettering) “Restaurant, Weddings and Banquets” (in red lettering) and the course’s two area code telephone numbers (in green lettering). The sign pole is proposed to be located 40 feet from the property line adjacent to the Santa Ana River and 1,665 feet from the golf course entry road. This location is between the first hole green and the second hole tee of the Club’s “Orange Course”. See Exhibit 4 for site photos.

#### **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**

<b>Direction</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Existing Land Use</b>
Project Site	A1 (SR) (FP-1)	Golf course
North	A1 (SR)	Vacant, open space
South	City of Anaheim	Riverside Freeway and vacant open space
East	San Bernardino and Riverside Counties	Riverside Golf Course and a mobile home park to the east of that
West	City of Yorba Linda	Vacant, open Space

#### **REFERRAL FOR COMMENT AND PUBLIC NOTICE:**

A Notice of Hearing was mailed to all owners of record within 300 feet of the subject site and to the City of Anaheim. Additionally, a notice was posted at the site, at the 300 N. Flower Building and as required by established public hearing posting procedures. A copy of the planning application and a copy of the proposed site plan were distributed for review and comment to six County Divisions, the City of Anaheim and CalTrans.

As of the writing of this staff report, no comments raising issues with the project have been received from other County division. The City of Anaheim submitted comments (Exhibit 2) regarding the Scenic Highway nature of the Riverside Freeway. A discussion of their comments is presented later in this report.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

The proposed project is Categorically Exempt (Class 11, construction or placement of accessory structures) from the requirements of CEQA. Appendix A contains the required CEQA Finding.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

Because the site is in an SR District and the adjacent SR-91 Riverside Freeway (freeway) is designated as a Scenic Highway (Viewscape Corridor – Type I) in the Transportation Element of the County General Plan, the issue is whether or not the proposed business pole sign is an appropriate use. In general, the purpose and intent of the SR District is to establish standards for the control of signs in areas which require protection of vistas, minimize the number of signs and provide signs that complement the main use of the property and not disrupt nearby visual amenities and vistas within the scenic corridors. The Transportation Element does not address business signs directly. In the Scenic Highway section, Policy 1.5 View Design, says in part that the project development should consider both short and long-range views.

There are numerous signs along the Riverside Freeway. These signs are most numerous west of Gypsum Canyon Road and east of Green Rive Drive in Riverside County. Fewer signs are located between Gypsum Canyon Road and the project site. There are several signs on the other side the freeway from the subject site, however this property appears to be within the city limits of Anaheim or Riverside County and the County has no jurisdiction as to their placement. To the east of the site is Green River Drive and a small commercial area. There are numerous business pole signs here are two large double-faced outdoor advertising signs (billboards).

The City of Anaheim commented that their General Plan has a “Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone” on the freeway that is within the city boundary. They also mentioned that the State has designated the freeway Viewscape Corridor – Type 1, the same designation as the County. The goals and policies for the City, State and County appear to be the same for the freeway. The City mentioned that actions be taken to protect the scenic corridor through among other things the “control of outdoor advertising”. Staff notes that the County has controls to meet the goals of the scenic corridor such as an overlay SR District that requires approval of a Use Permit for signs. Additionally, the proposed sign is classified as a “business pole sign” and is not an outdoor advertising sign or “billboard”.

The City did mention that the sign contains wording, (restaurant and banquet facilities) which may be inappropriate. Staff agrees with the City that these words and the word weddings is not a golf course related activity that needs to be on the sign copy. One aspect of the sign that could be incompatible with the purpose and intent of the scenic corridor designation is that of sign lighting. Staff is unable to determine the kind or brightness of the proposed internal lighting proposed since the submitted site plans did not provide any lighting information. The applicant explained to staff that if the sign were approved, a full lighting plan would be submitted. However, staff is of the opinion that sign lighting should be turned

off during late night and early morning hours, or as an alternate, the lighting should be eliminated. To make the proposed sign compatible with the scenic highway components, staff is recommending the following two Conditions of Approval regarding sign copy, lighting and landscaping.

*1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the installation of the sign, the applicant shall submit revised plans to the Manager, Current Planning Services Division for review and approval. Said revised plans shall include the following:*

- a. The deletion of the words “Weddings” and “Banquets” from the sign copy.*
- b. Information as to the type and brightness of the internal lighting.*
- c. Installation of an automatic timer to turn off the lighting between the hours of 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM.*
- d. An electrical plan showing that all electrical power to the sign pole is underground.*

*2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the installation of the sign, the applicant shall submit preliminary landscaping plans for that area around the base of the sign pole to the Manager, Current Planning Services Division for review and approval. Said landscaping plans shall include the plant material and trees that will be used to help screen the sign pole from SR-91.*

In the event the Zoning Administrator determines that the sign would not be compatible with the scenic highway components if it was lighted either internally or externally, then condition no. 1 above should be revised to read as follows:

*1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the installation of the sign, the applicant shall submit revised plans to the Manager, Current Planning Services Division for review and approval. Said revised plans shall include the following:*

- a. The deletion of the words “Weddings” and “Banquets” from the sign copy.*
- b. The deletion of any lighting either internal or external.*

Recommended Condition of Approval No. 7 (in Appendix B) contains wordings for a lighted and non-lighted pole sign. This condition will be corrected if the Zoning Administrator approves the proposal and takes final action on whether or not the sign should be illuminated.

Other aspects of the proposed pole sign requiring planning review are sign height, sign size, setbacks and FP-2 overlay.

- The sign is located in the A1 District that has a height limitation of 35 feet above finished grade. The proposed size is 30 feet high above finished grade and therefore conforms to the building height standard of the A1 District.
- The SR District does not regulate sign size. Sign size is regulated through Zoning Code Section 7-9-144 “Signs”. Since there is one business on site and only one sign proposed, Section 7-9-144 permits the sign area of each face of the proposed sign up to 300 square feet in area. The proposed sign is 200 square feet for each sign face, and therefore the sign area conforms to the applicable sign regulations.

- The pole for the sign is setback 40 feet from the property line with the front edge of the sign setback 30 feet from the property line. Since the A1 District has no setback requirement greater than 25 feet, the sign setback proposed conforms to the A1 District setbacks.
- The FP District of the Zoning Code does not specifically address pole signs. It does provide site development standards for structures in the proposed in a flood plain and specifically in the PF-2 zone. The structure proposed will meet these design standards. Additionally, the 40-foot setback proposed should not any interfere with any future improvement activities that may take place in the Santa Ana River channel.

**NOTE:** Just before completing this report and preparing it for printing and distribution, a staff member of the City of Anaheim Planning Department telephoned staff indicating that a letter with additional comments was being preparing for the Mayor of Anaheim's signature. The staff member indicated that the letter would not be available for release until after this report is finalized and distributed. If the Mayor's letter arrives prior to the September 6, 2001 Zoning Administrator hearing, staff will provide a response to the Zoning Administrator.

#### **CONCLUSION/SUMMARY:**

Staff is of the opinion that a business pole sign is an appropriate use for the subject site. The sign copy as modified with the recommended removal of the words Weddings and Banquets is appropriate for the site. In staff's opinion, the business pole sign, as modified, is in compliance purpose and intent of the SR "Sign Restriction" District overlay and the Scenic Highway (Viewscape Corridor – Type I) designation under the County General Plan. Staff's recommendation is as follow.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Current Planning Services Division recommends the Zoning Administrator:

- a. Receive staff report and public testimony as appropriate; and,
- b. Approve Planning Application PA01-0042 for Use Permit subject to staff recommend revisions and subject to the attached Findings and Conditions of Approval.

Respectfully submitted

Chad G. Brown, Chief  
CPSD/Site Planning Section

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**APPENDICES:**

- A. Recommended Findings
- B. Recommended Conditions of Approval

**EXHIBITS:**

- 1. Applicant's Letter of Explanation
- 2. Comment letter from City of Anaheim Planning Department, dated July 20, 2001
- 3. Site Photos
- 4. Proposed Site Plans

**APPEAL PROCEDURE:**

Any interested person may appeal the decision of the Zoning Administrator on this permit to the Orange County Planning Commission within 15 calendar days of the decision upon submittal of required documents and a filing fee of \$760.00 filed at the Development Processing Center, 300 N. Flower St., Santa Ana.